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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

Letter dated 9 November 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the letter addressed to you by the President of Mexico, Mr. Ernesto Zedillo, concerning the need to organize an international operation to assist the populations affected by Hurricane Mitch, in accordance with the appeal made by the Presidents of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex distributed as a document of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Manuel **Tello**
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Letter dated 5 November 1998 from the President of Mexico addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to write to you in support of the appeal made by the Presidents of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua for the immediate organization of a major international operation to assist the populations affected by Hurricane Mitch.

As you know, as it travelled through Central America, Hurricane Mitch left in its wake thousands of dead and millions of victims. Entire cities and villages were flooded with water and mud; entire communities have been left without homes or means of support, without water, food or medical care. Worst of all, perhaps, is the fact that many victims who managed to survive the actual hurricane remain cut off as a result of the massive destruction of roads, bridges and tracks. Entire agricultural areas and production sectors have been devastated, resulting in loss of jobs and production capacity in the flood and commodities sectors.

Past experience of natural phenomena of this kind has shown that unless massive action is undertaken immediately, the affected nations, the region and the whole world will be confronted with a human tragedy of incalculable proportions. I believe it is no exaggeration to say that there is a risk that thousands of families will suffer the ravages of famine and epidemic.

I am sure you will agree that these fellow nations have struggled bravely and resolutely for years to build the foundations of an economy for progress and a democracy for peace and justice.

I have no doubt, therefore, that you will also agree that the international community cannot allow a natural disaster, however terrible, to destroy the hopes that millions of men and women have placed in their own efforts and perseverance.

Those men and women, and their children and their future, hope that the international community will come to their aid promptly, effectively and in a spirit of solidarity.

The people and Government of Mexico have been making, and will continue to make, an extraordinary effort to assist those free and sovereign countries, with which we have the honour to share deep ties of history, culture and friendship.

However, the magnitude of the tragedy confronting El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua requires that every nation and every international agency contribute its capacities and human and material resources to assisting them in this emergency and supporting them in the work of reconstruction.

I have every confidence that you will provide all possible support for a major operation to assist the peoples of Central America in dealing with this tragedy. This is a task which we in the international community must all share.

(Signed) Ernesto **Zedillo Ponce de León**
President of Mexico